

In This Issue

	Page
VIEWPOINT	
• The Lessons Of 1984	3
CURRENT EVENTS	
• UAD-M For Self-Determination Of Political Status Within India	5
CENTRESPREAD	
• An Alliance Of Hope: The Minamata Declaration	6&7
RELIGION	
• What Is Sikhism?	8
HUMAN RIGHTS	
• Tragedy In A Tragic Bhagalpur	9
ECONOMY	
• Towards Self-Reliance	10
TECHNOLOGY	
• Oil From Rice Bran	11
SOCIETY	
• Population Stabilization Key To Development	12
PLUS	
Many More With Our Regular Features	

Barari Tortured S.S. Mann



By FG Correspondent

Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann, MP, charged in a recent interview that H.R. Barari, the now-resigned Governor of Haryana, tortured him personally while

he was in confinement. Barari who was the then Intelligence Bureau Chief, went to Mr Mann's cell and unleashed the most barbaric type of torture on him.

If Mr Mann's charges are correct and there is no reason for not believing them, Barari was not fit for the post of Governor. It was the

established policy of the Rajiv regime to reward officers, who have committed atrocities against Sikhs, with high-ranking positions. Manipulation of crimes against Sikhs has been the most important qualification for high positions in the government during the Rajiv Raj.

Barari should be arrested forthwith and must be tried under IPC or some relevant act, demanded Mr Mann in his interviews with the weekly *Current*.

Mr Mann also levelled charges against S.C. Anantram, the then chief of the Special Investigation Team and B.S. Deshmukh, the then Cabinet Secretary. He said Anantram entered his cell and tortured him deliberately. While revealing all this in the sensational interview, he said that Deshmukh was also responsible for concocting most of the barbaric acts against him. Deshmukh was later rewarded with the 'coveted' post of Secretary to Rajiv Gandhi for masterminding terror in him prison cell, Mr Mann Said.

Anantram was also rewarded handsomely. He was made an Ambassador of India. (However,

the Janata Dal government has cancelled this assignment). For this post Anantram went into Mr Mann's dungeon and administered electric shocks to him. "I was dazed, benumbed. How could they do all these beastly things to me, a fellow IPS officer, and I had not committed any crimes and no charges had been framed against me. The torture was so barbaric.... they were worse than the medieval barbarians and the Nazis. It was Hitler who unleashed these barbaric acts on the Jews. And Rajiv Gandhi on the Sikhs," he said. Mr Mann demanded a Nuremberg type of trial for Rajiv. "He should be tried for the crimes he has committed on Sikhs in and outside jails. He cannot and should not be allowed the freedom which he denies us," he demanded.

Mr Mann asked the new government to look into these acts of barbarism immediately. "Mr V.P. Singh has to meet the problems and not run away from it. That's how a statesman must conduct himself. A politician runs away from the issue but a statesman addresses them," said Mr Mann.

Government Misjudges Punjab Situation —Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora

By FG Correspondent

Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora, the President of the Sikh Forum, cautioned the government against being played into the hands of the Congress(I) by not holding Assembly elections in Punjab along with other states. In a press release Gen. Aurora said that it would be a grave political misjudgement on the part of the government to stick on to the notion that Punjab is not ready for Assembly elections. The decision would amount to yet another instance of discrimination against Punjab, he reminded.

The press release contended that the government should have foreseen the consequences before taking a quick decision on this extremely sensitive matter. "The decision of the All India Sikh Students Federation to honour the family of Beant Singh on the Republic Day in Amritsar is a sort of pointer to the kind of things that are now likely to happen", Gen.



Aurora cautioned.

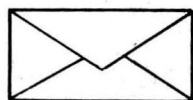
"More and more of such incidents may take place and before long repressive measures might be adopted. Repression has not succeeded in Punjab even when it was carried out systematically and brutally for several years. Nor will it succeed now. Instead the goodwill generated by the new

government will get dissipated and the Centre would get more and more sucked into the unending agony that has been the lot of Punjab for several years past. This would be ironical. One of the planks of the campaign waged by the National Front was to break the vicious circle into which Punjab has got involved," Gen. Aurora pointed out.

He was of the opinion that had the Punjab election being announced alongwith those in other states, all political forces would have got busy with its conduct. This may not have meant the end of incidents requiring intervention by the police. But, as in the case of the parliamentary elections, the main attention would have been focussed on the poll. By overlooking the dynamics of the situation, the Centre appears to have miscalculated.

Should the situation start deteriorating, as is feared, it may not be possible to conduct the poll in May, which is the outer limit for the Governor's rule. In that event the Centre would be left with no choice except to bring in another version of the 59th Amendment and postpone the State elections for some time more. That would be playing into the hands of the Congress(I). This is a contingency that should have been avoided. In the opinion of the Sikh Forum it can still be avoided before things get out of hand.

LETTERS



Strengthening The Secular Fabric

While the new government is consolidating its position, it is time to exercise political will for strengthening the cause of secularism, which is enshrined in our constitution. Recent events indicate that communal and obscurantist forces have been unleashed by politicians on our hapless society due to the greed for power, through communal and caste 'vote banks'. Some suggestions for reversing the process towards true secularism are:

- * Concrete steps be taken to study recommendations made by previous enquiry commissions such as the ones headed by Justice Madan, Justice Saxena and others, to find solutions to the root cause of communal riots.
- * Stop placating the minorities and rabid fundamentalists of all religions through charades such as the Muslim Women's Divorce Bill, issuing bans on books (such as Salman Rushdie's) as well as giving nods of approval to the Ramshila business for taking political advantage.
- * Introduce electoral reforms quickly, whereby canvassing for votes on the basis of religion and caste could be eliminated. Seriously consider the banning of virulently communal political parties.
- * A secular society should encourage worship in either the home or the place of worship only. Religious processions, which are generally aggressive and noisy, often tend to inflame religious passions, which are then utilized by anti-social elements to

advantage. Solutions must be found by consensus to regularize or eliminate such processions.

- * The creation of anti-riot squads comprising of specially trained personnel from all communities should be created which could defuse any build-up of communal tension in sensitive areas quickly. The government should commit itself to inducting intelligent and educated minority community members into the armed and police forces. This will help to bring the minorities into the main-stream of Indian society and give them a sense of security.
- * With autonomy being granted to the electronic media, steps must be taken to ensure that the most powerful medium of television is not used to project personality cults, obscurantist thought, pandering to the narrow religious beliefs of the less literate, etc. Soap operas with blatantly religious themes, which can only form a strong opiate for the masses, must be avoided. Themes from Hindu mythology without proper emphasis on the spiritual and philosophic values, appear to have become counter-productive for the cause of secularism. On the other hand, films such as *Tamas* and other telefilm of serious, socially-conscious directors commenting upon socio-economic changes required in our society can be fruitfully used to educate and enlighten our people.
- * It is strange that even after 40 years of independence, education which should have been given topmost priority in the regular 5-year plans is once again being neglected. It is mainly through proper education that an osmosis can take place to achieve social and economic justice which will ultimately lead to humanism and true secularism getting integrated into the Indian ethos.

However, all this needs strong political will from the leadership of the country. We can only hope that this time around the powers that be will not fail the people.

BHARATI JAFFREY
HAMEED JAFFREY

BOMBAY

Rajiv Today

The manner in which Rajiv Gandhi, as the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, discussed national issues with the Prime Minister, shows that the former has been extremely upset, since losing his empire despite trying to woo voters with the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Indira Mahila Yojana and the declaration of Prophet Mohammad's birth anniversary as a national holiday. Whatever Rajiv Gandhi could not

do in five years he wants the present Government to do in months. He made noises about Punjab and Kashmir in Parliament but did not have a single word about what the Congress(I) is doing for riot victims at Bhagalpur. Mr Gandhi should know that it is very easy to disturb peace but very difficult to restore it.

Perhaps Rajiv Gandhi wants to tell his disciples that, if he had returned to power, he would have totally crushed the people in these States. It seems he considers them anti-national. Possibly, in his opinion, only those belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other hardline organizations are true Indians. Everyone knows that he tried his best to destroy the Meerut population through Mr Vir Bahadur Singh, then chief Minister of U.P., and the Bhagalpur population by staying the transfer of the Deputy Magistrate.

MEERUT SHABAB HALDER

Readers are requested to send in their letters typed or neatly handwritten to the Editor, Forum Gazette, 3 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014. The letters may be edited for clarity.

Sound And Fury

If there is one Indian who knows the names of the recipients of the Bofors payoffs, it is Mr. Gandhi and he should oblige the nation by revealing the names.
— Mr. Jaipal Reddy.

V.P. Singh and company want to forget Bofors after coming to power. I will not let them.
— Mr. Subramaniam Swamy.

We are open to suggestions. Ours is an open government.
— Mr. P. Upendra

I hate to even mention his (Mr. Sidhartha Sankar Ray's) name.
— Mr. Jyoti Basu.

I do not believe in, nor encourage, groupism.
— Mrs. Nandini Satpathy.

We have contested 29 elections while the Nehru family has contested only 17.
— Mr. Devi Lal.

The other parties do not matter as my party has the mandate of the people of Punjab.
— Mr. Simranjit Singh Mann.

He does not call the shots in the State. Really speaking, it is the AISSF which does.
— Mr. Kishan Lal Sharma, BJP General Secretary.

I am as good an Indian citizen as anyone else.
— Mr. Atinderpal Singh.

The trouble with being a leader is that you can't be sure whether people are following you or chasing you.
— Mr. Ronald Reagan.

The National Front has given promises to every passerby. How many promises will it keep?
— Mr. Kanshi Ram.

In Hindu mythology you see every god and goddess carrying an astra. That is the basis of Hindu society, strong and self-reliant.
— Mahant Avaidyanath MP.

We talk a lot about shakti, women's strength. But what is this shakti? Her biggest pitfall is the glorification of the Bharatiya nari role, a role in which she gets trapped.
— Shabana Azmi.

I have done everything possible except standing on my head to persuade Mr. Bahuguna to end his fast.
— Mrs. Maneka Gandhi.

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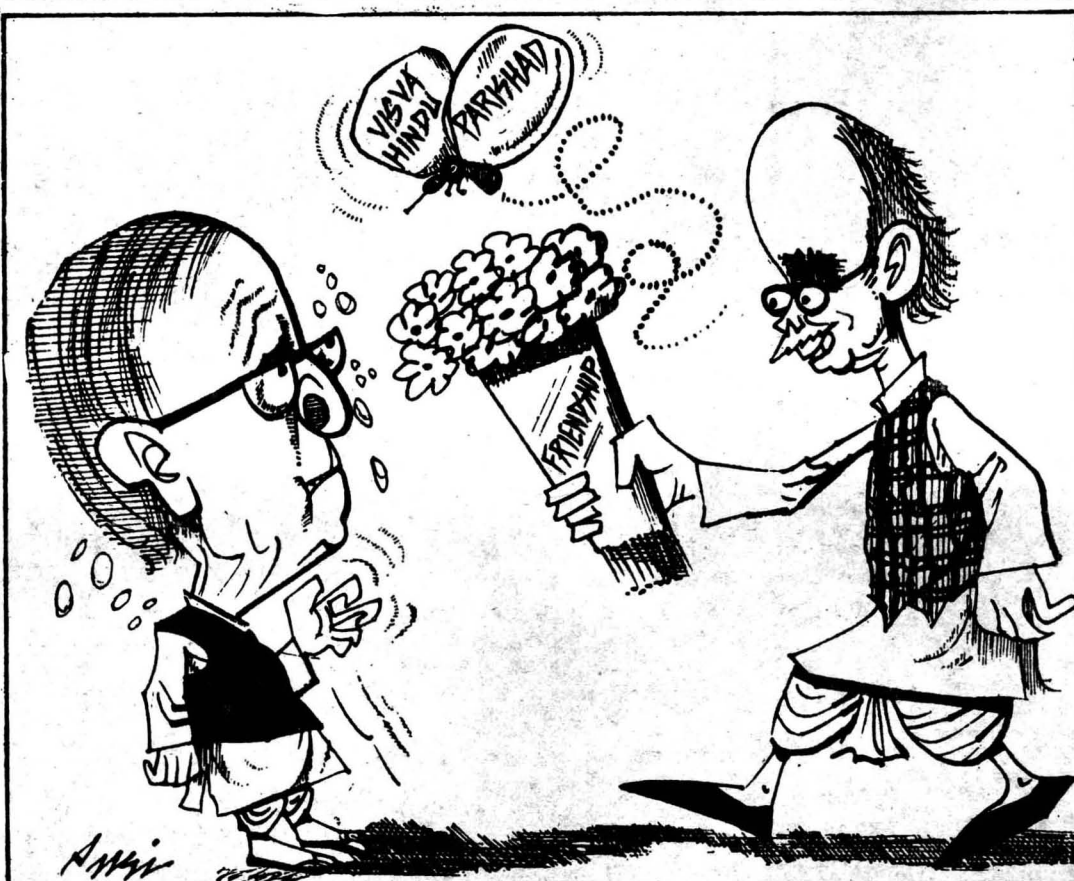
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The Lessons Of 1984

The Kashmir Crisis

Even when the Punjab crisis is still unresolved, another crisis in Kashmir has erupted. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that it had been there for quite some time and now things have come to a head.

In Punjab, the Centre has done what it should not have done. A statement issued by the Sikh Forum (given elsewhere) explains the position. In our editorial last time we had explained that to postpone elections in Punjab would be counter-productive. It should not be necessary to repeat those arguments except to call attention to yet another crisis that has come to a head in the state bordering Punjab.

Three things require to be noted here. One, the crisis has been in the making for a long time and it was utter irresponsibility and selfishness of the Congress (I) which led to the overthrow of Farooq Abdullah in 1983. The installation of an incompetent and corrupt government led by GM Shah and the eventual peace, so to speak, between Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah were its tragic outcomes. In the bargain the credibility of the State government has taken a serious knock.

Secondly, there has been the undoubted rise in the sentiments for Pakistan. The whole process can be described as the failure of political leadership in the State or some other equivalent way. Whatever way it is seen, the fact remains that those who are opposed to fundamentalism and all that goes with it do not enjoy that measure of standing which is necessary for them to enjoy if things are to return to normal in Kashmir though, as it looks, that state is likely to have a new set of political rulers as and when the next election is declared. Farooq Abdullah and his party may survive as a group, and even as an important group, but the majority is likely to be against them and who would be the new set of leaders is difficult to anticipate. They can be openly anti-Indian and pro-Pakistan. They can be fundamentalists in their outlook in which case the state of Kashmir would have a difficult time. All kinds of contingencies can arise. The only thing definite in this situation seems to be that the present leadership will not survive except as a ghost of its former self.

Thirdly, the current crisis is a particularly difficult one. To bring things under control would require Herculean efforts and a measure of public support which is denied to the Governor and his advisors. Repression succeeds only when applied selectively or ruthlessly. Anything in between is more or less foredoomed to failure. Given the circumstances, the kind of repression that would be carried out cannot be but of the in-between type and therefore it is not likely to succeed beyond a point.

In this situation, what can be done? Perhaps the only option available to the Indian Union is to somehow keep things under control during the next three-four months and as soon as the weather changes, an election should be held. Whoever comes to power has the mandate of the people and should be asked to form the government. The Indian Union should know how to do business with the new Chief Minister.

There would be problems and strains. But then that is a part of the situation and it cannot be helped. In conclusion, one thing may be said in passing. For the Centre to continue to have a confrontation both in Punjab and Kashmir would be more than its administrative and political resources can cope with. The crisis in Kashmir underlines most unambiguously the urgency of settling things in Punjab. Not to do so would amount to adding to its own problems and virtually cracking down under the weight of these two problems. That would be a path of political folly, to put it no more strongly.

By Bharat Dogra

Towards the end of 1984 there were two big tragedies which had a deep impact on the minds of all sensitive Indians. The reference here, of course, is to the anti-Sikh violence of November 1984 and the Bhopal gas disaster of December 1984, with the passage of time, the sadness of these tragedies was enhanced by the continuing injustice to the victims of these tragedies, and the inability of the nation, till the time of this writing, to show to them the sensitivity which they so badly needed.

Under these circumstances, most attention has rightly been given to providing justice and proper rehabilitation to the victims of these tragedies. This is no doubt the most important task today. But it is also important not to ignore some wider lessons of these tragedies.

The most striking aspects of the Bhopal disaster is that a technology which was quite capable of killing thousands and inflicting incapacities on lakhs was being used for several years to produce chemical pesticides. There are several methods of controlling pests by following which dependence on chemical pesticides can be reduced and even eliminated. If in addition some chemical pesticides are required, then several methods exist to produce various different types of pesticides. There is no justification at all to use a most dangerous method of production, based on the storage of huge quantities of most lethal gas, to produce pesticides and that, too, in the middle of a busy city, and in the immediate vicinity of crowded slums.

As if the choice of this technology and product in Bhopal was not shocking enough by itself, we've to contend with the additional fact that on several occasions attention was drawn to the terrible hazards implicit in this. Yet these warnings were simply ignored.

This draws attention to the tremendous power that industrial owners and managers have been able to acquire to create needs, to decide what we should consume or use, and then produce these products in ways which are most profitable to them regardless of the very heavy social costs involved. Instead of responding to the real needs of people these interests produce a variety of high-profit products which are not really needed and in fact may be highly destructive from a social point of view. Under the present norms of economic thinking, where all such products are also added to GNP and push up the growth rate, this social waste and destruction

remains hidden from the general public.

In the area of processed foods, gadgets, pesticides, medicines and tonics, intoxicants and stimulants, construction materials, synthetic clothes and cosmetics and in many other area of industrial

products. The industry also introduces a whole range of new chemicals and other intermediate products in the promotion process from time to time whose impact on health is either not known or else is actually destructive but which manage to save or earn a few more dollars.

This enormous power of a small number of persons, guided predominantly by the profit motive, to play with public health and safety causes havoc in day to day life but attention to this is drawn only at the time of big disasters like the Bhopal tragedy. It is important to draw attention to this wider tragedy of which the Bhopal gas disaster is only the biggest and the saddest culmination.

Coming now to the anti-Sikh violence, attention has been rightly drawn to some well-known politicians who are widely alleged to have played an important role in the violence. But we also have to take measure of the additional, even more important fact that these men, or their agents, were able to collect tens of thousands of people to participate in the violence. Most of the participants in this violence came from the colonies inhabited by poor people. What is the relationship that these men have with the poor people, who have actually remained neglected under their rule, that they are able to collect them for such acts of violence? Can this relationship be broken so that the people living in slums do not fall prey to the manipulations of those who want to misuse them for wrong ends? Why has it not been possible for the democratic and pro-poor forces to interact with slum dwellers in such a way that they can resist the spread of such dangerous tendencies in slum areas?

The punishment of some powerful persons for their involvement in the anti-Sikh violence of 1984 will certainly have a deterrent effect, and so is badly needed. But this is not adequate. Anyone who feels seriously concerned about November 1984 should also seek answers to the wider questions raised above. It is possible to seek revenge for what happened in November 1984 in a peaceful way, a constructive way. This is by working among the people of these areas in such a dedicated way as to expose fully the selfish leaders who have been lording over these areas for so long and destroy their support base. By punishing the guilty of Nov 1984, we can ensure that these persons will not be able to create havoc again, but in addition by following this constructive path we can also ensure that the likes of them will also not be able to create such havoc again, and will not be able to mobilize people for acts of violence.

The organizers of the November 1984 anti-Sikh riots were some well-known politicians. But we also have to take measure of the additional fact that these men, or their agents, were able to collect tens of thousands of people to participate in the violence. Most of the participants in this violence came from the colonies inhabited by poor people, who have actually remained neglected under their rule, that they are able to collect them from such acts of violence? Why has it not been possible for the democratic and pro-poor forces to interact with slum dwellers in such a way that they can resist the spread of such dangerous tendencies in slum areas?

activity, the tendency of producing frivolous, unnecessary and even harmful products at great social cost and then selling them with a good advertisement budget can be seen. New frivolous products are created in this way, or new frivolous uses are created for existing

By S. Viswam

Translating Promises Into Reality



The new Government has announced a time bound action plan to translate into reality the promises and assurances made earlier. After forming the Government, Prime Minister, V.P. Singh, in his first broadcast to the nation, had highlighted some of the main features of the election manifesto which his government proposed to accord high priority in implementation. Subsequently, in his first press conference, he had listed some of these features which his government would tackle in the initial stages. While a few of the features came in for special action in the just concluded inaugural session of the ninth Lok Sabha, the 'action plan' promises the implementation of a number of programmes on the basis of a predetermined time table.

The new government's overall strategy would naturally be built within the framework of the pledge announced by the constituent parties of the National Front in the manifesto. Broadly, they had pledged not merely to replace one set of rulers by the other, but an alternate model of governance based on federalism and decentralization, institutional accountability, economic equality and social justice, freedom of communication and access to information for all citizens.

Monitoring Progress

It is well within reasons to presume that the action plan, approved by the Union Cabinet, is

an earnest offer. By their very nature, the programmes listed in the plan are not glaringly new or original since they are mainly reiteration of policy decisions taken by the National Front before the November 1989 Lok Sabha poll. What the action plan represents is firstly, a token of the government's sincerity in keeping its word, and secondly, a pointer to a time-frame within which it would implement

promises. While the Union Cabinet has indicated the thrust areas of development, it would be upto the ministries and departments now to identify priority areas of action for implementation in a time bound manner. The ministries are expected to make separate announcements in due course, of the details of the plan of action.

The action plan is accompanied by the government's assurance that it will not only give the highest priority to the implementation of the programmes but also will closely monitor the progress. This is a welcome assurance, since it has been a bane of development in India that while governments at the Central and state levels have acted with good intentions in laying down programmes, adequate attention was not given to their implementation. This resulted in the impression spreading among the people that there are always a wide gap between promise and performance. It is to be hoped that the tone of determination reflected in the action plan will be sustained by the new government.

Budget Session

Promised for the budget session are: a constitution amendment bill to make the right to work a fundamental right; a constitution amendment bill on Panchayati Raj which will be introduced after discussion with Chief Ministers; a long term fiscal policy announcement; a comprehensive bill on electoral reforms; a constitution amendment bill for setting up a high level judicial commission; one to amend the legal services authorities act and a constitution amendment bill to guarantee the right to information.

New bills are also to be brought to amend the Indian Post Office Act and the Indian Telegraph Act,

to ensure the citizen's right to privacy. Also earmarked for the budget session is an amendment to the Official Secrets Act to ensure the citizens right to information. Special Cabinet Committees are to be set up before the end of this month to examine the recommendations of the second backward classes commission, known as the Mandal Commission and the recommendations of the Gujral committee on the promotion of Urdu language.

Monsoon Session

The action plan makes a specific reference to the monsoon session of Parliament in connection with the introduction of a new industrial relations bill and necessary consultation is expected to be

completed before the end of May this year. There have been two subjects over which there was controversy on and off during the last few years. One was the reconstitution of the National Integration Council. The erstwhile opposition had alleged that the former government was not summoning the existing council despite an increase in communal and social tensions. The second was over the apparent unwillingness of the previous government to set up an interstate council as provided in Article 263 of the constitution. The new Government plans to initiate consultations with Chief Ministers and State Governments. It wants to convene the first meeting of the reconstituted National Integration Council before April. It expects to set up the inter-state council after the forthcoming elections to the state assemblies. Yet another meeting of the chief Ministers has been scheduled for April to finalize a programme for land reforms.

It was possibly because of this that few governments really made an effort to bring about speedy land reforms. Two other fields of development on which the government has some positive ideas relate to agriculture and urban development. The National Front's intention to allocate 50 per cent of investible resources in the agricultural and rural sectors of the economy, beginning with the annual plan for 1990-91, has been mentioned by the Prime Minister on a number of occasions. In order to give farmers a remunerative price, changes are proposed in the method of computing prices. A long term policy on licensing of sugar mills is to be evolved before April, and a scheme of debt relief upto 10,000 rupees to small, marginal and landless cultivators is to be finalized. The action plan has informed the nation what the government's intentions, plans and programmes are. Now, the nation will look forward with keen interest to their implementation.

NOTICE

During the Executive Committee meeting of the Sikh Forum held on 20 January 1990, it was pointed out by the members that many persons have approached them with various problems and grievances they were facing.

And we are delighted to inform you that Gen. J.S. Aurora, President of the Sikh Forum, would be personally available in the office of the Sikh forum at 3-Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014, on all Saturdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. It would be appreciated if persons desirous of meeting him inform this office prior to their arrival. They are also requested to inform us of their purpose of meeting Gen. Aurora.

Kindly convey this information to the concerned in your respective areas.

Secretary

Sd/-



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UAD(M) For Self-Determination Of Political Status Within India

By FG Correspondent

The Unified Akali Dal(M) clarified that it was not the Anandpur Sahib resolution but a resolution "for self-determination of political status within India" which it wanted implemented. On how it differed from the Anandpur resolution, party spokesman, Gurtej Singh, said there were many versions of the Anandpur resolution, and that their's was "none of them".

Briefing newsmen about the meeting of his party delegation with Punjab Governor Nirmal Mukharji, he said they had urged him to immediately order administrative changes. "The administrative machinery put together by the now discredited Congress-I is still intact and is preventing the return to normalcy", their memorandum said.

According to the spokesman, there existed several militant groups under the state machinery which consisted of certain ex-

militant and policemen, fully trained and provided with all facilities and equipped with AK-47s. Gurtej Singh said 400 such armed people were still operating in the state indulging in killings, extortions and kidnappings. He said, it were these people who were responsible for all the crimes in the state, though killing of Gobind Ram might not be the handiwork of these people.

He said that so far three such gangs had been unearthed. These gangs were of Jaswinder Singh Kala and Santokh Singh Kala, both of Amritsar and of Dalbir Singh of Patiala. Both the Kalas were regular policemen and had since been killed, while Dalbir Singh who killed Patiala police chief Sital Dass and his deputy, was an ex-militant was taken into the police as sub-inspector, he said. The UAD urged the governor to find out how these groups were recruited, trained, what was their number and activities.

The party deplored that on the eve of the Ludhiana rally, the camp office-cum-residence of the

UAD chief Simranjit Singh Mann at Amritsar was raided by 150 jawans of the CRPF, and the portion occupied by Mann thoroughly searched though nothing incriminating was found. Servants and



guests were arrested and released only the next day. He said it was baffling that it happened without the knowledge of the chief secretary or the director general of police. The deputationists

demanded that it was imperative to dismantle such administrative machinery.

The continuation of President's rule is the negation of the democratic process, the memorandum said. It said that though certain "communally motivated" Hindu leaders were opposing the holding of assembly elections in the state, the majority of Hindu voters were in favour of elections as demonstrated conclusively during the Lok Sabha elections. The UAD, demanded immediate elections to the state assembly and the SGPC. It had also demanded adequate representation in the grievances committees in the districts. It said that either it should be given the representation as was given to the Congress(I) earlier or it should be in proportion to the percentage of votes polled by each political party in the last elections.

Sharply reacting to the killing of 13 alleged terrorists recently, it said that they had been killed in false encounters, as was evident from the fact that not even a single policeman was injured.

The UAD demanded an inquiry by a judge of the High Court into the killings. It also asked for a list of those wanted by the police. Its other demands included the withdrawal of all "oppressive" laws and regulations, release of those who were detained on false charges, the withdrawal of para-military forces and supply of information regarding those who were killed during Operation Bluestar. The UAD appreciated the measures taken by the central government so far.

In a separate statement, the UAD welcomed the recall of Karan Singh from the ambassadorial post in the U.S.

The statement said he was "communal" and was partly responsible for the Jammu incident of January last year in which a peaceful Sikh gathering celebrating Guru Gobind Singh's birthday was attacked and many Sikhs killed. It also demanded the recall of Julio Rebiero who during his two-years term in Punjab was "responsible" for the killings of 700 innocent Sikh youths.

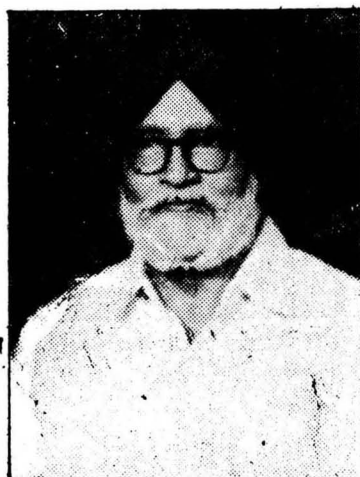
Symbol Of India's Soul

By Amar Chandel

Gen. Mohan Singh used to describe the Indian National Army as his closest link with his soul. He was being modest. In reality, he himself was the personification of the soul of India, and in his death on December 26 the country lost one of its most gallant sons.

The INA is today synonymous with Subhas Chandra Bose. Many even in Punjab may not know that it was Gen. Mohan Singh who founded this band of fierce patriots in 1941. Even this name was given by the General himself.

Gen. Mohan Singh was a born soldier, if ever there was one. He chose to join as an ordinary sepoy in the army although the influence of his maternal grandfather,



Gen Mohan Singh

Chaudhry Takhat Mall, a Zaildar, could have got him a much higher post. He topped all his exams in the Army and had a truly meteoric rise. His founding of the INA changed all that.

After being dismissed from the Army he joined politics but remained a soldier first and last. His political career culminated in two terms in the Rajya Sabha (in 1960-66 and re-election in April 1972 to be note. In 1976 he was elected a member of the Punjab Assembly.

All through his 80 years, Gen. Mohan Singh remained true to his

oath to seek nothing for himself but to suffer and sacrifice and be content to remain a bottom stone so that a cause can flourish and prosper in the hands of others. The boy who had to walk 10 miles to his school and back in the blazing sun or in freezing cold because he could not spare even four or five paise for the tonga far, was hale and hearty and cheerful till the

very end. His noble thoughts are capsuled in his four books, "Leaves from My Diary", "Mahapurbi Punjab", "Congress Unmasked" and "Soldiers' Contribution to Indian Independence."

His bhog is to take place in his village Jugiana (Ludhiana) on January 7. In future, he will no longer be a living legend but an indelible part of Indian history.

Atinder To Press For Compensation

Newly elected MP Atinder Pal Singh, who is at present in Tihar Jail, told the Supreme Court that he would not give up his petition seeking compensation and action against the Intelligence Bureau, Special Investigation team, CID, Secret Military Service, Delhi Police (Crime Branch) and other Government officials who severely tortured him in jail during the Cong-I regime.

This was conveyed orally last fortnight to Justices A.M. Ahmadi and Ms Fathima Beevi by counsel Altemeish Rein appearing for the

Sikh Forum. The Forum headed by Lt-Gen. J.S. Aurora had filed the petition on the basis of the Jan. 16, 1989, letter of Atinder Pal Singh sent from Nabha security jail stating how electric current was passed through his private parts and roller treatment given to him with iron pipes as also wooden logs.

The petition with the letter has been pending in the court since last year without any order on Atinder Pal Singh's prayer for his immediate medical examination and its report to the court.

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The slogan at the beginning of the 20th century was progress. The cry at the end of the 20th century is survival. The call for the next century is hope. Impelled by that hope for the future and with a keen sense of urgency, we began our concluding gathering of the People's Plan for the 21st Century in Minamata.

It is significant that we met in Minamata, a place which symbolizes to all of us development at its most murderous. As it did to the people of Bhopal and Chernobyl, a giant organization with advanced science, technology and production techniques condemned the people of Minamata to fear, sickness and death, and their beautiful bay to irreparable damage. These three disasters—Minamata, Bhopal and Chernobyl—can be taken as benchmarks of our time. At Minamata, the industry of a capitalist country poisoned its own citizens. At Bhopal, a U.S. multinational corporation poisoned people of the South. At Chernobyl, socialist government spilled radiation out over its land and people, and beyond its borders to the whole world. There is no need here to repeat the long and mounting list of eco-catastrophes. These three tell the story: there is no place to hide.

But these are not the only symbols of the disaster that 'progress' has been. For the indigenous people, disaster came with the confiscation and exploitation of their lands and resources, and destruction and disruption of their way of life. For women, development has meant disempowerment of all kinds. They have been marginalized and subordinated by male religions, male science and knowledge, and male maldevelopment. The billion dollar pornography and sex industry has reduced them to mere commodities. At the same time, they continue to be subordinated within their own homes.

For the poor of the Third World, development has meant less and less control over their own resources and lives. Their struggle to survive has become more difficult, their existence has become precarious. There has indeed been progress and development, but only for the few. The rest are paying for this development by sacrificing their lives, cultures, values.

Development and progress have been disastrous because they are based on an obsession with materialistic acquisition. Profit and power have emerged as the gods of this development. The assumption behind this development has been that man is supreme, that he can use and misuse nature as he wishes. Development has been a project to conquer nature, rather than to live in harmony with it.

Development has meant increasing centralization of power. The more the word 'democracy' has been used, the less has been its practice. For indigenous people and for minorities, democracy has meant the tyranny of the majority. For the poor in the Third World,

democracy has meant the rule of the powerful, a very small elite. Both development and democracy have become dirty words for the oppressed because, in reality, they have come to mean impoverishment and disempowerment.

Development has also meant destruction of the rich values of diversity. It has destroyed people's creativity and capacities. Decisions are made by fewer and fewer people. Economic decisions are made by big conglomerates, political decisions by the powerful in our capitals, or in the capitals of the big powers; the film and television industry decide what entertainment is and who our heroes are. Governments decide what kinds of education our children will have and how many children we will have. Some governments force us to have abortions, while others forbid it. Some even decide our religion.

Human beings become less powerful, less autonomous, less human. Small communities and even small and poor nations become less autonomous. They are subordinated by world markets, World Bank policies, the power games of world powers.

The gap between rich and poor, North and South, has been increasing. In the last two decades, more wealth and resources have been extracted from the Third World than in the entire previous century. The coming decades are likely to witness more rapid accumulation, concentration and centralization of power in the North. Debt payments, profits, royalties, capital flight, deterioration of the terms of trade are among the mechanisms of imperialist exploitation. This unjust, vulgar and ugly development has also created a South in the North, with the terrible living conditions of indigenous people, racial minorities, migrant workers, and the unemployed.

The 20th century has brought us more and more murderous wars than at any other time in history. The technology of killing has advanced beyond the wildest imaginations of any previous era. The state, which was supposed to be our great protector, has turned out to be the greatest killer, killing not only foreigners in wars, but also killing its own citizens in unprecedented numbers. The 20th century has perpetuated and intensified the practices of genocide, ethnocide, ecocide and femicide. These practices have occurred in the name of what we call 'progress' and 'development'.

All these force us to ask, is there not something profoundly wrong with our understanding of historical progress? Is there not something profoundly wrong with our picture of what to fight for? With our image of where to place our hopes?

Janakashaba, a word in the Minamata dialect, became familiar to all PP21 participants. *Janakashaba* means "a world standing not like this". It is a beautiful word. At Minamata rallies a new song, *Janakashaba ba hosikayo* (we want *Janakashaba*), was sung. The Minamata Gathering has

shown us that global conditions today have placed the people of the world on a common ground with a common fate for the first time in history. If we want to survive, live together in dignity and in mutual respect of our diversity without violating each other's autonomy and right to self-determination, we need *Janakashaba* wherever we are.

At this gathering, we talked about our aspirations for *Janakashaba*. Our hope is not an empty one. It is not a mirage. It is born in the midst of injustices, vices and corruptions which make us cry and at times make us despair. We discussed the hope which inspires us to fight injustices as well as social, human, and ecological decay. We asked ourselves whether there is a basis for such hope.

Life and nature itself is being defiled, not only human beings. Now, the sky, oceans, mountains, rivers, forests, plants, animals, and

**We were born into
a world divided
into hostile groups.**

**If we want to
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**We have met in
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then is there hope,
not otherwise.**

all other living beings are in crisis, their very existence threatened.

We clearly hear the voices of those closest to nature. We have realized that we must fight not only to restore the sanctity of human life, but of all life.

We were born into a world divided into hostile groups. If we want to survive collectively, then these divisions must be overcome. We have met in Minamata and found in each other the will to overcome the structures that divide us. Here, then is our assertion, the 21st Century must not be built by these forces of degraded development, but by the forces resisting it. Only then is there hope, not otherwise.

This is precisely what is being acted out before our eyes today by millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region. They do not accept what has been foisted on them as their fate, they are ready to take the leap, and they are taking it. We

An Alliance The Minamata

witness wave after wave of people's movements, emerging, spreading, defying state boundaries, universal relevance of participatory democracy, undermined the basis for traditional anti-

People's Plan For Minamata Declaration

I. At the Minamata Gathering: the Synthesis (Aug 21-24), the final meeting of the People's Plan for the 21st Century, we reaffirmed the resolutions and recommendations for a concrete action programme, that had been agreed upon in the following People's Plan for the 21st Century conferences, meetings and interactions, held through a whole month on the Japanese archipelago:

1. Tropical Rain Forests

We demand an immediate ban on the export of timber from the world's tropical rain forests. To secure this ban, we support the blockading of logging sites and propose the following actions:

1.a. Take joint actions, with the support of labour unions and other progressive forces, to stop the export and import of timber from tropical rain forests;

1.b. Exert pressure on the corporations and governments of countries exporting and importing such timber.

1.c. Raise the issue among grassroots organizations; and

1.d. Organize media campaigns to publicize joint actions and broaden understanding of the issue by initiating transborder educational programs.

2. Official Development Assistance (ODA)

The purpose of Japan's ODA program is not to assist recipient peoples. People of the recipient countries and the people of Japan need to take joint action to stem current ODA, which is a tool for supporting Japan-U.S. political and military strategy and Japanese big business. Concretely, we need to conduct joint surveys of ODA programs, monitor their implementation, take action to stop destructive aid projects and help secure compensation for people victimized by ODA.

3. General Agreement On Trade and Tariffs (GATT)

The free-trade system promoted by GATT has been creating numerous economic imbalances and hardships. The worldwide liberalization of farm commodities being promoted by GATT is in fact a program for subjecting agricultural and livestock products to the domination of the transnational corporations. GATT sponsored liberalization of agriculture is also destroying small-scale family farms and rural society as is linked to the destruction of the tropical rainforests.

Such a free-trade system based on the theories of powerful nations should be transformed immediately. All farmers in the world including family farmers and farm workers should organize counter-GATT joint actions in cooperation with consumers and environmentalists throughout the world.

4. Demilitarization Of The Asia-Pacific Region

We recognize that during the Second World War the countries in the Asia-Pacific region were the scenes of some of history's violent battles. We also recognize the pivotal role that the government of Japan is now playing in U.S.A global strategy, and drastically reduce its military budget. The three non-nuclear weapons principles of not producing, possessing or introducing nuclear weapons into the country should be strictly implemented. U.S. warships not verified nuclear-weapons free through inspections and checks, shall not be allowed to enter any Japanese ports. The Japanese government also should immediately terminate its complicity with low intensity conflicts in different regions, abetted through provision of official development aid or by other means.

ies, complementing one another, and sharing an increased sense of urgency fostered by new networks of communication. The major struggles of the Korean, Philippine, and Burmese people have shown explosive power. Recently, we have witnessed the rise of a new democratization movement of the Chinese people.

The recent experience of glasnost has reaffirmed the continuing

communism and delegitimized the ideology of the Cold War, thus creating new conditions conducive to people's struggles. However, perestroika may well prioritize economic competitiveness at the expense of support for people's struggles for justice and democracy.

Be that as it may, the changes in the socialist countries provide

Of Hope: a Declaration

with our brothers and sisters in the socialist countries for overcoming the East-West division and for

uation and the main reason for this gathering. *Janakashaba* is the spirit of the people in our time. This

The 21st Century in Action Programme

We also agree to work immediately and actively towards making the Asia-Pacific region nuclear free and ridding it of foreign military installations and military domination both by great powers and smaller regional powers.

We also agree to actively support the struggles for independence in the Asia-Pacific region especially those in East Timor, West Papua, Vanuatu (New Caledonia) and Tahiti-Polynesia (French-Polynesia).

Trafficking In Women

Trafficking in women in Asia is increasing at an alarming rate. Filipino, Thai, Taiwanese, and other women are sent to Japan and other countries to be exploited in the sex industry. We resolved to take immediate joint actions in the sending and receiving countries to protect women from abuse and from other human rights violations.

Recognition Of Ainu As Indigenous People Of Hokkaido

We endorse the Ainu people's demand that the government and people of Japan recognize them as indigenous people of Ainu (Hokkaido), repeal the Hokkaido Native Protection Act and enact the new Ainu Basic Law being proposed by the Ainu people. This proposed new law recognizes the indigenous rights of the Ainu people, respects their identity as an ethnic entity and guarantees the development of their own culture and life based on their traditional culture and values. We resolved to take all actions necessary towards the realization of this demand.

Land Rights For Indigenous Peoples

recognition of the special identity that indigenous peoples

have with their land, which they believe was given to them directly by the Creator, we agreed that this is what distinguishes indigenous populations from other racially oppressed minority groups in society. In this regard, we endorse the demand of indigenous peoples throughout the world for the immediate recognition and legislative guarantee of their inalienable right to their lands, waters and fisheries. We resolved to work immediately and actively towards the realization of this demand.

8. Hazards Of Industry, In Particular The Nuclear Industry And The Export Of Industrial Toxic Waste.

We demand the immediate termination of all facilities in the nuclear fuel cycle, and all hazardous industrial activities which create an unsafe environment and generate toxic wastes. We demand that all nuclear wastes should remain in the country where the waste is generated and that all nuclear waste should neither be exported to other countries nor dumped into the oceans.

We oppose the export of toxic industrial waste to Third World Countries and support transborder joint action to oppose such activity. We advocate the strengthening and expansion of the people's network of solidarity against nuclear power and industrial processes which create the toxic wastes. We especially support the strengthening and expansion of solidarity networks among victims of industrial hazards, as the most concrete expression of people learning from each other and acting against the processes of victimization intrinsic to such technological processes.

opportunity for new alliances working to establish genuine democratic power world-wide.

In these big countries and in smaller ones, in every region, town, and village, the people are the move. And they are aware of each other as never before, communicating, joining in unprecedented ways. All of this is new. The main force defining our sit-

is why we do not hesitate, despite everything this century has brought us, to declare that the 21st century will be the century of hope.

There is another reason for hope. The present system has begun to undermine itself by creating its own contradictions: growth against nature, militarism against need for collective security, uni-

formity against cultural diversity, alienation against human dignity, mindless consumerism against humankind aspiring to regain lost values, meaning, and spirituality.

The economy has pushed itself to such absurd limits that more and more people are feeling alienated and lost. All over the world, simultaneously, more and more people are searching for different ways of living in harmony with one another and nature.

These contradictions are pushing forward new historical subject from amongst the victims of the global catastrophe; i.e. indigenous peoples, women, the unemployed and the self-employed in the so-called informal sector. Alienated youth without much future, and the concerned intelligentsia are also joining the historical struggles of the masses—peasants, workers, the urban poor. The mushrooming of people's movements is giving rise to the hope that we can create

Democracy is something millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region are fighting and dying for. We need to retrieve it to serve the people's struggle. We must begin with the premise that the state, and the institutions that it pretends to constitute 'democracy' cannot be relied upon to bring us peace, justice, security and dignified life, or an end of ecological destruction.

a society where everyone can live with dignity.

New conditions support these aspirations. We have the knowledge, and the technology. We also have the grassroots organizations, people's spirituality and values, reaffirmed, rediscovered and newly created in the struggle for survival in the face of the collective suicide imposed by the present pattern of development.

The simultaneous emergence of this global phenomenon has its own commonalities: common interests, common values and common threats organically linking all oppressed people and exploited groups in the world. A new logic is emerging against the logic of growth, transnational companies and elitist power. This is the true 'logic of the majority.' The 'majority' here does not mean the majority as measured in polls and elections, but the global majority, the most oppressed. It means that

they must have the prerogative, and this requires a new set of priorities based on human values and in harmony with nature, culture, gender, indigenous people and other ethnic groups.

A new internationalism is being born out of these local, national, regional popular struggles confronting common enemies. These new movements are growing up within the context of a peculiar contradiction involving the role of the state. Our region is being organized by transnational capital, which is bringing together far-flung and heterogeneous areas and peoples into an integrated, hierarchical division of labour, in which peasants, workers, indigenous peoples and women are subordinated. States are vigorously promoting this, as the agencies which mediate the entry of transnational capital within their national boundaries. At the same time, transnationalization of the economy undermines the basis of the state. This places its claim to sovereignty and its pretense as protector into question, thus weakening its legitimacy, and creating new opportunities for the people to intervene. The state seeks to protect itself through intensification of repression and violence, as we see today in many countries, or, as in the case of Japan, intensification of the attempt to implant statist ideology into the minds of the people.

In this same process, the engine of development has overheated in Japan and is running wildly out of control, producing a saturation economy. The Japanese work intensely in heavily managed situations in which they are virtually powerless. The Japanese economy does not empower its citizens, but rather seeks to make them powerless and fragmented. And it has also reproduced within its boundaries a 'North' and a 'South'. The 'South' includes millions of poorly paid women part-timers, contract workers, day labourers, and increasingly guest workers from South and Southeast Asia as well as farmers who are rapidly being marginalized.

One of the words which has been stolen from the people and corrupted is the word 'democracy'. Originally, democracy meant the autonomy, the self-determination, the empowerment of the people. To many people in the Third World, however, it has come to be the label for a facade of 'civilian government,' disguising state terror and repression in a ploy to claim legitimacy for the state to serve the interests of the powerful. For indigenous peoples and other minorities, democracy has been the ideology of 'majority rule' that has defined them as 'minorities' who could be legitimately ignored.

On the other hand, democracy is something millions of people in the Asia-Pacific region are fighting and dying for. We need to retrieve it to serve the people's struggle. We must begin with the premise that the state, and the institutions that it pretends to constitute 'democracy' cannot be relied upon to bring us peace, justice, secure and

dignified life, or an end of ecological destruction. Only the people's movements themselves, independent and autonomous, can do this. And here we emphasize that we are talking about a democracy that honours the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples and other minorities.

At the same time, democracy can no longer be achieved within the limits of the state. Today, the lives of millions of people are being controlled, shattered, deformed and destroyed by decisions made outside their communities, even outside their countries. These decisions are made by foreign governments, by transnational corporations, by agencies such as the IMF, the World Bank and big power summits.

Hence, we declare that all people, especially the oppressed people, have a natural and universal right to criticize, oppose, or prevent the implementation of decisions affecting their lives, no matter where those decisions are made. We declare that this right, as a people's right, is more fundamental than any artificial law or institution established by the state. We declare that this right means the right of the people to cross all borders, national and social, to carry their struggle to the exact sources of power seeking to dominate or destroy them.

We need to make clear that this right must be interpreted as justifying the actions of the powerful crossing borders to oppress, exploit and dispossess the people. On the contrary, we are asserting that the people have a right to counter these interventions which are going on all the time.

We recognize that the struggles of subjugated peoples for self-determination, independence, and to establish their own government, or of people to change or improve their governments, are crucial. At the same time, we believe that, in the long-term, it is the transborder political actions of the people, marginalizing states and countering the power of international capital, that will produce the 21st century that we hope for.

We have no illusions about the present condition of the peoples of the Asia-Pacific region. The ruling powers maintain themselves by dividing the people and encouraging hostility among them. The rulers not only seek to rule us, but also to manage our mutual relations, depriving us of our right to do this for ourselves. This we must reject and overcome. Transborder political action, support and solidarity campaigns across borders will gradually develop a new 'people,' that transcends existing divisions, especially between people living in the North and South.

This is not utopian: the actions we describe are actually going on all over the Asia-Pacific region, and all over the world. What we assert is that these transborder actions are not merely the proper responses of the people to desperate situations. Taken together, they amount to the people collectively making their own 21st century.

The Word 'Sikh' means a 'disciple'. A Sikh is a person who believes in one God and teachings of the ten Gurus, enshrined in the Guru Granth Sahib the Sikh Holy Book. Additionally, he or she must take Amrit, the Sikh Baptism.

Brief History

The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak, who was born in 1469 A.D. in the village Talwandi, now called 'Nankana Sahib' near Lahore (Pakistan).

Right from his childhood his keen mind would not accept all the groundless rituals, superstitions and dogmas which passed for religion in those days.

Guru Nanak and the nine Gurus who succeeded him, set a wonderful example of living spiritually, while yet taking an active and secular part in the world.

The Tenth and the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A.D.) initiated the Sikh baptism ceremony in 1699 A.D. and thus gave a distinctive identity to the Sikhs. The first five baptized Sikhs were named Panj Pyare (Five Beloved Ones), who in turn baptized the Guru on his request—an event hitherto unknown in the history of mankind.

Shortly before passing away the Guru ordained that Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scripture would be the ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs and the temporal authority would vest in the Khalsa Panth—The Sikh Commonwealth.

Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Scripture was compiled and edited by the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjan in 1604 A.D. This is the only scripture in the world which has been compiled by the founders of a faith during their own life time.

Guru Arjan also built the world famous Gurdwara, Darbar Sahib, at Amritsar which is the nucleus of Sikhism.

During the eighteenth century the Sikhs were subjected to various suppressions and persecutions by the authorities of the time motivated by communal fanaticism. They had to make supreme sacrifices to protect and preserve their faith and separate entity.

The Mughal Empire was on the verge of disintegration. The Afghans had started invading the country under Ahmed Shah Abdali. The Sikhs availed of this opportunity to establish their own kingdom which they ultimately achieved under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839 A.D.) The Sikh Empire lasted for half a century and was annexed by the English in 1849 A.D.

During the freedom struggle of India a large number of Sikhs kissed the hangman's noose, faced all the brutalities and braved the bullets and suffered long term imprisonments in order to liberate the country.

Although the Sikhs constitute only 1.7 percent of India's population, yet they have made a name for themselves in almost all walks of life such as armed forces, agriculture, sports, industry, education, medicine and engineering

etc., through sheer dint of hard work and with a missionary dedication. Their adventurous and enterprising nature has taken them to almost all countries of world.

Religion And Philosophy:

The Sikh religion is strictly monotheistic, believing in our One Supreme God. Absolute yet allpervading, the Eternal, the Creator, the Causes, without enmity, without hate, both immanent in His creation and beyond it. It is no longer the God of one nation, but the GOD OF GRACE. That being so, He creates man not to punish him for his sins but for the realization of his true purpose in the cosmos and to merge in from where he issued forth.

"O my mind, thou art the embodiment of Light; know the Essence".
"O my mind, the Lord is ever with thee; through the Guru's word enjoy His Love".
"Knowing thy essence thou knowest thy Lord; and knowest thou the mystery of birth and death".
(Guru Granth, P. 441).

The basic postulate of Sikhism is that life is not sinful in its origin, but having emanated from a Pure Source, the True One abides in it. Thus sayeth Nanak:

"O my mind, thou art the spark of the Supreme Light; know thy essence".

Not only the whole of Sikh Philosophy, but the whole of Sikh history and character, flows from 'this principle'.

This religion consists of practical living, in rendering service to humanity and engendering tolerance and brotherly love towards all. The Sikh Gurus did not advocate retirement from the world in order to attain salvation. It can be achieved by any one who earns an honest living and leads a normal life.

"He alone, O Nanak, knoweth the way, who earneth with the sweat of his brow, and then shareth it with the others".
(Guru Granth, P. 1245)

Nanak gave new hope to the downtrodden mankind to join his fraternity as equals. He is a creator of the NEW MAN in the new world supported by a new morality.

Riches and personal possessions are not hindrance in living by spiritual ideals. Sikhism does not believe in the maxim.

Distinctive Personality

A Sikh has a distinctive personality. This distinction is represented by five symbols, popularly known as Five K's, because the first letter of each symbol begins with the letter 'K'. These are Kessas (long and unshorn hair), Kangha (a comb), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kachha (pair of

shorts) and Kirpan (a sword).

People who wear a uniform and who are imbued with disciplined outlook, are better able to achieve unity of purpose and acquire a real sense of brotherhood than those who have set no particular standards. A Sikh without these symbols is a nonentity.

Those who cut their hair or trim their beard commit a breach of the Cardinal Rules of the Order, and are considered as 'apostates'.

Sikh Baptism

Amrit (The Sikh baptism) is a must for every Sikh. No minimum or maximum age is stipulated for getting baptized. A Sikh undertakes to uphold the principles of its faith and Code of Conduct as prescribed by the Gurus.

Any man or woman of any nationality, race or social standing, who adheres to the principles of the Faith has a right to receive baptism and join the Sikh Commonwealth.

Sikh Code Of Conduct

The Sikh Code of Conduct is known as "Sikh Rehat Maryada." It is based upon the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh traditions and conventions. These rules are meant for carrying out the religious ceremonies and enforcing the discipline of the Faith in a uniform manner throughout the world. No individual or organization, whosoever important it may be, has a right either to amend these rules or to frame new ones. This power rests with the Panth i.e. the community as a whole acting through their Beloved Five (Panj Pyare). Any rule which overrides the basic teachings of the Faith is ultra vires.

All intoxications such as alcohol, tobacco and all its derivations and drugs etc are forbidden.

A Sikh may eat flesh of an animal or birds etc., which is fit for human consumption except that which is slaughtered by rituals.

Adultery is considered as a sin. A Sikh should regard another man's wife as his sister or mother; and another man's daughter as his own daughter. The same rule is applicable to the Sikh woman also.

Woman In The Sikh Society

Woman is regarded as a significant part of the Sikh community. She receives the utmost reverence for her role in the family and society. The birth of a daughter is not considered inauspicious nor does there exist any custom like Sati—the burning of the widow with her husband's dead body on the funeral pyre. Rather a widow has a right to remarry if she so desires.

A woman is considered to have the same soul as man and she has an equal right to grow spiritually and to attend religious congregation and recite divine hymns in the Sikh Church.

Sikh women do not put on veil (Purdah). Dowry and divorce are not permitted. Wearing of clothes

which expose the body and breed lustful thoughts are considered dishonourable.

Ceremonies Of The Sikhs

The important ceremonies among the Sikhs are those associated with birth, naming (christening) the child, Amrit (baptism), Anand Karaj (marriage) and the death ceremony. The most important among all these is the Amrit (baptism) ceremony.

No special rituals are attached to these ceremonies. The only important aspect is recitation of Shabad (hymns) from Guru Granth Sahib.

The dead amongst the Sikhs are cremated and their ashes are thrown into the nearest canal or river. No sanctity is attributed to any particular river. It is forbidden to erect monuments over the remains of dead.

Fairs And Festivals

The Sikhs celebrate the following days:

The birth and death anniversaries of ten Gurus.

The installation of the Holy Granth as the Spiritual Guide (Guru) of the Sikhs.

The birth of the Khalsa i.e. Baisakhi Day which generally falls on the 13th of April each year.

Martyrdom days of the prominent Sikhs who died for the sake of their religion or in defence of the oppressed.

The days connected with the important events of the Sikh history.

The Daily Life Of A Sikh

Every Sikh is expected to get up in the morning before dawn. After taking bath he should meditate on the name of God.

"Rise thou early and meditate on the Name;
Yea, dwell on the Lord night and day;
Then, thou sufferest not sorrow; and all the woes depart".
(Guru Granth P. 255)

The following five compositions are recited every day:

Morning: Japji Sahib, Jaap Sahib and Ten Swiyyas.

Evening: Rehras.

Night: (before going to bed) Sohila.

A Sikh is required to attend Gurdwara—the Sikh church—as a part of daily routine.

Sangat And Pangat

The two important features of a Gurdwara are Sangat, congregation; and Pangat, community kitchen, also known as Guru-Ka-Langar. This community kitchen is meant for providing food to all devotees, pilgrims and visitors. It is a symbol of equality, fraternity and brotherhood. It is here that the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the kings and the paup-

ers, all share the same food sitting together in one row. This kitchen is run by the common contributions of the Sikhs. The institution of Langar (common kitchen) is instrumental in creating social equality among the whole mankind.

The Gurdwara

The Sikhs Church is called Gurdwara. In every Gurdwara the Sikhs Holy Scripture is installed in the main hall, which is used for prayer and daily service.

Every person irrespective of caste, creed, culture or nationality can visit it. Before entering the Gurdwara one must take off his shoes and cover his head. On entering the main hall every one approaches the Holy Book and bows before it in reverence and takes his place.

Any Sikh male or female may conduct the prayer or perform the services.

Services begin with the singing of hymns with the musical instrument. On special occasions, singing is intercepted with lectures, poems, or other composition highlighting events from Sikhs history. The services are concluded with Ardas, the prayer, which in God's blessings in granting peace, prosperity and protection to all mankind.

After the prayers a Shabad-hymns, is read from the Holy Scripture and then Karah Parshad, a sweet semolina-pudding made from flour, sugar and butter is distributed to the congregation. On each Gurdwara Nishan Sahib a flag of yellow colour surmounted with Khanda, a double edged sword, is erected. This symbolizes the combination of temporal and spiritual aspect of Sikh life.

Each city or town has Gurdwaras according to its requirements. All of them have the same sanctity. There are some Gurdwaras which in addition to being a place of prayer have also importance. The five most important Gurdwaras are known as TAKHATS/ thrones or seats of authority. These are Takhat Patna Sahib in Bihar, Takhat Kesgarh Sahib at Anandpur, and Takhat Damdama Sahib at Talwandi-Sabo in Punjab, Takhat Hazur Sahib, and Nanded in Maharashtra and Akal Takhat Sahib at Amritsar, which is also the supreme seat of authority. Religious as well as temporal injunctions are issued from here from time to time for the guidance of the community. These injunctions are known as Hukam Namas and have the binding force of Sikhs Personal Law. There is no such class priesthood in Sikhism. However, the one who perform the daily service is called the Granthi. The hymn-singers are called Ragis and the singing of hymns is called Kirtan i.e. praise of the lord.

We conclude this article with the following words from our daily prayer.

"O God, give us light, give us understanding, so that we may know what pleaseth Thee. And may all (the whole mankind), prosper by the Grace.

The Tragedy In A Tragic Bhagalpur

The months of October and November 1989 witnessed a terrifying and shameful outburst of large-scale communal violence in Bhagalpur District of Bihar. The report below is based on visits to these violence scarred slums and villages on December 30 and 31. The first report is from Bhagalpur city and the second report is from villages near this city. These reports are written mainly from the perspective of the relief and rehabilitation work that is required.

By Bharat Dogra

Madinagar (Baisbighi) is a *basti* located on the Western border of Bhagalpur city, in Nathnagar area. It is inhabited mainly by powerloom and handloom weavers, specially the former. Bhagalpur is a big and famous centre of silk weaving. The residents of this *basti* are Muslims. This is the last urban *basti* and after this the rural area starts.

In the recent outburst of communal violence in Bhagalpur city (Bihar), this was one of the worst affected *bastis*. A mob numbering about a thousand attacked this *basti*. They smashed up and burnt houses as well as looms. Visiting this colony nearly two months after this violence, this reporter tried to assess the magnitude of violence as well as the rehabilitation effort required.

The people of this colony told this reporter that nearly 211 families dependent mainly on weaving work live here, and the livelihood of almost all these families, leaving aside about 10 or 20 as chance survivors, has been destroyed or damaged in varying degrees in the recent violence. In the case of some families, the looms have been burnt and entirely destroyed, in the case of some others these have been partially damaged. In the case of some families electric motors have been damaged or that is more likely looted, and in the case of several other families the beams have been looted. Some weavers reported other parts as having been looted and damaged.

The yarn stocks of most weavers have been looted. The result of all this is that most of the weavers are today without work. As we went around the *basti* which once used to reverberate with the sound

of working looms, we could hear looms working only at one place. Thus not only have their belongings been looted but in addition, what is even more important, the source of livelihood of most of

two sides of the road we could see two *bastis* both of which had suffered extensive damage in the recent violence. One *basti* is called Maskin Barari (in Champanagar area) while the other *basti* is called



them has been destroyed to such an extent that they are unable to work now, and see little possibility of starting this work in the near future unless substantial financial help is made available.

At the time of the violence the residents of this *basti* had to desert their homes and seek shelter in a neighbouring locality called Champanagar. They had to remain there for nearly two weeks. During this period the government provided them free food at the rate of 200 grams of grain per person per day. In addition every adult was given a sheet while every child was given 2 metres of cloth. A missionary agency also gave help in the form of a *dhoti* or a sari and a set of utensils per family. A Central Minister has promised bank loans to help them to restart their work.

It is clear that while the relief work to provide them basic needs (food and protection from cold weather) was also quite inadequate, the framework in which the rehabilitation of their occupation is being planned is even more so. When the damage is so extensive as has been the case here, more sanctioning of bank loans can hardly be adequate. The weavers here said that it will take them several years to come anywhere near their earlier position.

This reporter visited another locality in Bhagalpur city which is inhabited predominantly by weavers—both powerloom and handloom weavers. Here on the

Indian Ghosh Road, Mukhya Murgiyachak, Barki Bazaar. In one *basti* the population consists mainly of Hindu weavers and in the other *basti* the population consists mainly of Muslim weavers.

Both the communities have suffered heavily in the recent violence. The extent and type of the damage done to their livelihood is more or less similar to that recorded earlier for Madninagar *basti* and the relief work has also been equally limited.

Here also the weavers said that there has been some talk of giving them bank loans to help them restart their work, but these loans are likely to be given at a high

interest of 12.5 percent. The weavers felt that in their present condition when the work has suffered such massive damage, such loans cannot help them and they will be in no position to pay back these loans. If the government cannot go beyond giving loans in helping them, they said, then the loans should carry a very low interest rate (or these should be interest-free loans) and these should be made returnable in very small instalments.

Various donors can also help by contributing a revolving fund from which various weavers can borrow in turn, and then return the money back to this pool, a field officer of a voluntary agency suggested.

The compensation for damage suffered by various houses is being made in a very arbitrary manner, and the amounts being sanctioned are not at all adequate for repair work, the people here complained.

Finally, it is important to stress an important point which the weavers of Madninagar made. They said that just before the violence, the traders from whom they purchase yarn had exerted pressure on them to obtain the cash dues owed to them, on the pretext of pressing cash needs. In retrospect some weavers feel that the traders perhaps anticipated or had knowledge of the violence that was to engulf this area very soon. Reports of this nature make it imperative that the various economic issues and contradictions in the areas where communal violence takes place should be studied carefully to identify the economic roots of certain tensions and violent acts.

One aspect of the recent communal violence in Bhagalpur district which has caused great concern is that this violence spread in a big way to rural areas. According to official figures, such incidents were reported from as many as 150 villages. According to information provided by Ms.J.S.

Bordia, Magistrate Relief Operation, 14 of the 21 blocks in the district were affected. The worst affected blocks included Nathnagar, Jagdishpur, Sabaur and Rajaun.

Makramdi, located in Sanjha Shyampur Panchayat in Rajaun Block (Bhagalpur district) stands as a very tragic reminder of the organized violence that engulfed the villages of Bhagalpur recently. A walk through the streets of this village and neighbouring village settlements like Chakhmuniya inhabited by Muslim population revealed a large number of damaged and burnt houses. It appeared that the mob numbering several thousands which attacked this village had all the time to indulge in looting, arson and violence with no hinderance whatsoever.

This is how the villagers reported the events, "We saw a huge armed mob coming this way. We could have made an effort to defend ourselves but we were not given a chance as the police was also clearly on the side of those who wanted to attack us. First we were asked by the police to go inside our houses. Later they asked us to gather on the road. The area was left free for the violent activities of the mob."

The result was that eight persons were killed in Makramdi village and seven persons were killed in Chakhmuniya village. All the other villagers (including persons from neighbouring settlements) were taken to Rajaun Police Station where they remained for one day. They were then given shelter in Bhusiya College premises (located about 6 km from their villages) where they remained for 23 days. Here they were given a daily ration of 10 gms of rice and 25 gms of pulses per person per day. After 24 days they came back to their village to find that all their belongings including even their cattle and poultry had been looted.

Continued on page 11

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The reason why I will be presenting an interim budget is very simple. I do not want to make the projections on the basis of the infrastructure of the previous Government. Some experimentation and certain innovations are to be tried. Only then I would like to present the budget. But before that, we intend to take the country into confidence regarding the economic situation. This is exactly why we circulated a report on the current economic situation, recently.

I would like to explain the observation which I have been asked about several times and which has been made by one of our spokesmen, that when we took over, the coffers of the Government were empty. It was only a picturesque way of describing the situation and it should not be taken literally. It only means that our economic situation is rather difficult.

At the same time, this statement—that our coffers are empty—will be an understatement for the simple reason that far worse than the empty coffers are the debt burdens. At the present rate, by the end of the current financial year the total burden will be hundred thousand crores. In that case the debt service ratio, of course, will be quite high. Economists have been taking the 20 per cent debt service ratio as a fairly safe ratio, but when it is crossed, efforts are immediately made to reduce the debt subsidies. I am not quixotic to declare that there will be no debts at all, that there will be no borrowings. But the efforts will be to see that firm steps are taken.

As we gradually try to evolve a

Towards Self-Reliance

By Prof. Madhu Dandavate

more self-reliant economy, to that extent the need to borrow will naturally go down and thereby external debts will be reduced. If you ask me a straight question: Will you borrow from the IMF and other financial institutions, I will not give a very clear-cut answer.

But one thing I would like to stress is that even under the compulsions of the situation in which we are required to borrow, we shall not accept any such conditions from financial institutions that would be against our economic and financial policies and an affront to the nation. We just would not allow that to happen.

Import And Export Policy

As far as import and export policy is concerned, it is a matter of concern. The general thrust of our financial and economic policies will be that even when imports become inevitable, we will try to see that they are selective. Selective means both in terms of the commodities and in terms of the point of time when the imports are made. For example, when the Kuo oil deal was struck, even the public undertaking committee had unanimously drafted a report in which it was very clearly said that when oil prices were actually falling, arriving at the Kuo oil deal at a higher constant price was not prudent. So the point of

time is important. We have to keep that in mind so that we may not waste our foreign exchange reserves.

There are certain production oriented technologies for which components are to be imported. If adequate foreign exchange reserves are not available and those components are not imported and replaced, the entire production process is likely to suffer and therefore our developmental activities will also suffer. So we need foreign exchange reserves and for that we will have to go out of our way to see that exports are augmented, so that it will be possible for us to have that foreign exchange reserve. The question of the import of capital goods is hence very significant. The broad guidelines will be very clear, but at the same time the approach will not be dogmatic; it will be realistic.

Import—Where Necessary

In one of the interviews I had said that I will not confuse dynamism with quixotism. What I mean is that dynamism is one thing and acting like Don Quixote is something else. In the broad outline to build a self-reliant economy, there should not be an emphasis on multi-nationals and collaborations. At the same time, if in certain sectors certain technology has to be imported for, say export purposes,

in that case wherever it is necessary and inevitable we will welcome it.

Though the picture is not rosy, I would like to inject into our economy an element of confidence. In my political acrimony with my predecessors I would not like to throw out the baby with the bath water. I would like to create a climate in the country and outside that when investment is to be made, people may speculate whether the investment may be worth it or not. I would not like suspicion to be created at all. For this I would point out the reaction of the capital market. Their initial reaction was to wait and watch, and they do it with everyone. But right now, there is a lot of buoyancy there. It is reacting quite well. At the same time we have our limitations in reacting to market forces. We would not like the poorest sections of society to be exposed to the tender mercies of market forces.

Combating Inflation

Due to a number of factors, today we find that inflation is on the rise. There are certain matters which need to be attended to immediately. It is an accepted fact that mounting deficit financing is definitely causing inflationary pressures on the economy. It has been completely established that the economy of shortages built up the economy of black marketing.

We also see that there are certain procedures and norms, certain taxation policies which are rather cumbersome—they cause delays, and delays cause obstructions to development. In addition, certain loopholes in the law cause corruption. Therefore, the entire effort of the new Government will be to simplify the rules and norms. Whether it is taxation law, licensing policy, or norms of administration, it will be simplified in such a manner, that the process will become less cumbersome. Very often, whenever laws are made,

experts sit and find loopholes, to discover how they can be exploited. We would like to avoid that. In this connection firm steps will be taken to check the black money economy. We would like to unearth that money. We would like to destroy that money.

Then there is the area of wasteful expenditure. I do not want to quantify everything right now. But I was trying to see the expenditure incurred for various festivals inside and outside the country—Apna Utsav and others—and I find that there was no need for some of this expenditure. I am not anti-art or puritanical, but ultimately the priorities are to be fixed. Therefore, all wasteful expenditure will have to be curbed. For instance, the expenditure on VIP security is very huge. But sometimes psychological factors also help. It happens with the prices. Sometimes a scare is created and you find a lot of fluctuation in the prices.

On the very first day we announced that we are going to have a price committee and we will see to it that concrete and firm measures are taken to see that the prices are controlled and they are brought down. It was found that while in many places there was a lot of release of sugar by wholesalers, in some places sugar prices were coming down. These are the psychological factors which also help. Therefore a climate of austerity will be created, a climate where wasteful expenditure is avoided.

Balanced And Pragmatic

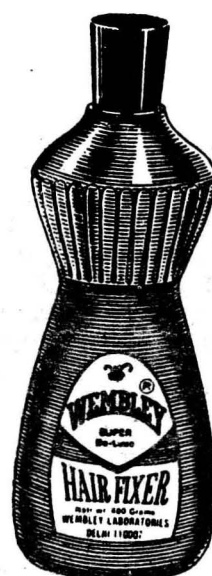
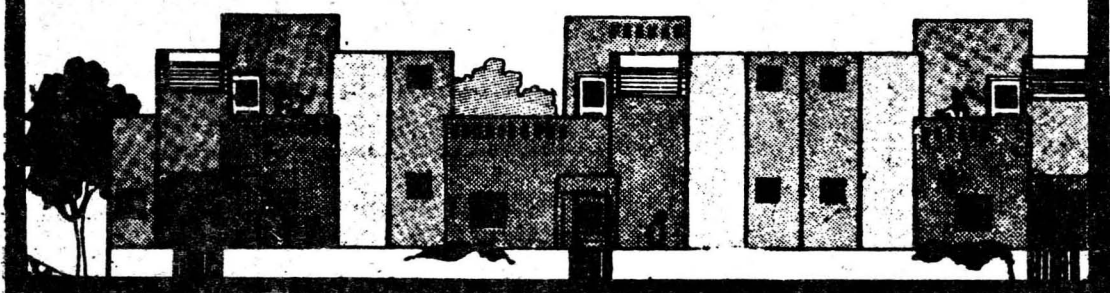
It will also be seen that no psychological atmosphere is created inside the country and outside, that will generate doubts in those who want to invest, about the inner strength of our economy. I do not want to create an impression that our economy has become insolvent and that we are going down the drain. From that—we are fully confident that we will be able to maintain the strength and stability of our economy. We are confident that gradually greater self-reliance will reduce the external debt burdens. We are confident that investments will grow. Our approach will be balanced and pragmatic.

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Oil From Rice Bran

By Swatantra Radhakrishnan

Gone are the days when women used to hand-pound paddy in the home and then sieve the same for sifting out rice, husk and of course the bran. Our elders knew the worth of rice bran and they never let it be lost. They used to consume it raw or mix it with gur and til oil and make it delicious in the process. In my childhood, I had seen grand mothers tempting teen-aged girls in their households with round globules (laddus) of bran mixed with gur and til oil. They considered it to be good for growth. Some had even confided in me that bran has medicinal value and that it can help prevent many diseases. But there used to be large quantities of bran. And what remained was given to milch cattle. These practices are forgotten by many. Handpounding of paddy is now restricted to tribal areas which have so far not been encroached upon by rice mills.

Rice that is available in the market is polished rice sans any trace of bran. And that reminds me of yet another thing: of a lesson my school text book which tried to teach us that 'Beri-beri' a polyneuritic disease, common among children, is mainly caused by vitamin deficiency in rice-based diet and that the disease can be prevented by consuming bran or par-boiled rice which retains most of the original bran.

Thanks to industrialization, modernization, the spread of women's education and employment, par-boiled rice is in fact disappearing even in the traditional strongholds like Kerala and Assam. Par-boiled rice has become a scarce commodity and therefore a luxury. The common people who have to buy rice have no other choice but to consume polished mill-rice with practically no trace of the vitamin-rich bran.

But such an important source of vitamins cannot remain obscure for long. And bran has literally been retrieved and restored to its pre-eminence, thanks to the Central Food Technology Research Institute, Mysore. Extraction and preservation of oil extracted from rice bran is now commercially viable. In fact in countries like Japan, Korea and the Philippines rice bran oil industry is a flourishing one. They follow a very efficient and profitable method for large-scale oil extraction from rice bran as they have integrated rice mills. There are gigantic mills having 100 to 150 tonnes capacities. Husking and polishing are done in such mills on a large scale and the bran which is sifted out goes straight to attached oil extraction units.

Oil Potential

Rice bran contains as much as 25 per cent oil whereas soyabean has only 16 percent. How-

ever in the case of sunflower and groundnut, oil content is as high as 40 to 45 percent respectively. The price of rice bran oil in the market is Rs. 15,000 per tonne. It is as good as sunflower oil so far as the heart is concerned as it has a high level of polyunsaturated fats.

At present there are only four rice bran oil mills in India. Three of them are in Madurai and Trichy in Tamilnadu and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. The fourth one is in Haryana. The process of oil extraction followed is the same in all the four mills. It involves the mixing of hexane with bran. The alcohol absorbs the oil content of bran. The hexane-oil mixture is then subjected to flash heating which evaporates the alcohol leaving the oil behind. Hexane is costly and has to be imported. The loss of hexane due to evaporation is about five per cent. Research to reduce the percentage of evaporation loss is going on apace under the aegis of the Technology Mission on Oilseeds. Any breakthrough in finding a way for the optimum utilization of hexane will result in the process becoming cheaper which will in turn reduce the price of bran oil.

An increase in the production of bran oil depends on many factors like the opening of new mills and an increase in the production of rice. It is anticipated that both short term and long term measures will result in an increase of 6 to 7 lakh tonnes in the production. The need for more oil extraction mills needs underscoring as rice bran deteriorates within a few hours and becomes unsuitable for oil extraction.

The presence of lipase, a fat-splitting enzyme, in rice bran is a major hurdle in the production of edible bran oil. The enzyme rapidly hydrolyzes the oil and releases fatty acids, partial glycerides and glycerols. Oil quality will be adversely affected if the bran is not stored properly. Change of colour and bad odour will affect its flavour making it inedible. The net result is that a highly edible oil becomes inedible and has to be utilized in industries like those manufacturing soap.

Stabilization Of Rice Bran

The lipase enzyme has to be inactivated to prevent the formulation of more fatty acids. Stabilization of rice bran is the process which can check this. There are three methods of stabilization: cryogenic, thermal and chemical.

The Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI) has released the thermal stabilization process for industrial applications. It uses steam and electricity. Par-boiling and curing of paddy also inhibits lipase enzymes to a certain extent.

Another stabilization process developed by CFTRI enables the storage of bran upto 10 days. The process inactivates the enzyme responsible for deterioration of bran. The process has been tested on raw rice bran and par-boiled rice bran. The equipment for the same has been designed in such a way that it is simple and does not involve manual handling of acid. The process is based on acidification of the bran by using hydrochloric acid. About 40 litres of acid is required per tonne of rice bran. The acid level is not too much as it sounds. An average human being produces a much stronger level of HCl in the stomach which is part of the digestive juices.

Acid-stabilized bran has two advantages. It is not easily affected by moisture. Stabilized bran has been tested for edibility and nutritive value in mice, poultry and dairy animals. Some vital constituents like tocopherols as also the colour remain unaffected by the process. No residue of HCl is left in the oil.

Studies in poultry have demonstrated that there is a slight improvement in feed utilization of the bran following the acid treatment. This, however, is not significant.

Acid treatment of bran has shown no adverse effect on corrosion of steel in simulated laboratory trials. However, there is some corrosion seen in the outer layers of the plant.

Chemical stabilization can be done in all types of mills, small or large with all types of brans, whether par-boiled or raw rice without any constraints on quantity.

Commercial trials of the chemical process have started in four mills of the Food Corporation of

India at Sembanarkoil, Thanjavur, Mannargudi and Chidambaram. As far as the stabilization of lipase is concerned it has been proved beyond doubt that rice bran can be kept as long as 90 days without substantial increase in the formation of free fatty acids.

Efforts are continuing in the form of research, experiments, trial applications and the like for mass and cheaper methods of production of bran oil which is a good source of vitamin B.

(PIB)

Tragedy In Bhagalpur

Continued from page 9

The people of this village are partly farmers and partly weavers. The main occupation of most of the population is weaving. In Chakhmuniya *bidi* making is also an important source of livelihood. Most of the looms have been badly damaged. Beams, spare parts and yarn have been looted. It is not possible for the people to carry on their work. Their livelihood has been destroyed.

On December 31 when I visited this village, I found it particularly tragic to learn that no government relief had reached this roadside village so far even though the people had returned to their village more than a month back. The only relief that had reached them was from various Muslim organizations. They have provided clothes, shoes, utensils and above all, bamboos for house-construction. While all help is important and welcome, it is sad that the villagers in their hour of need should get the feeling that none else has come to their help other than Muslim organizations. It must be stressed that even the help received from Muslim organization is far from adequate. At the time of our visit, several houses were still in a stage of complete ruin. Repair work had been started only on a few houses and shops, specially the roadside shops.

If this is the condition of a roadside village, then the mind should-ers at the plight of remote villagers, several of which are known to have witnessed extreme forms of violence.

While relief supplies like some blankets and utensils have certainly reached some villagers, the more important task in villages like Markamdi—where the main source of livelihood is weaving—of trying to restore the lost livelihood of the people has not even been started yet. The government should give importance to this aspect of rehabilitation also. If they are helped in the rehabilitation of their lost livelihood, this will be the best way of ensuring basic needs to them, although immediately some relief goods are also needed, keeping in view the massive damage and the cruel, relentless cold wave. Drinking water sources (including wells and handpumps) have been damaged and polluted in the course of their violence in over 100 villages. This also requires urgent attention.

There is a danger that the steps to help the weavers may be confined to the cities or villages just near the cities. These efforts have to be extended to the affected villages as a large number of weavers, specially handloom weavers, live there. The help should be offered on highly concessional and easy terms as the weavers in many of these places have experienced very heavy damage.

It would be a wise step to carry out studies of this industry with a view to finding the links of the vested economic interests may have in this kind of violence also. This will make it possible to take steps which can resist similar tragedies in future.

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Population Stabilization Key To Development

By S.C. Kacktwana

Estimates predict that, if the present fertility rates are not curbed, India's population will be touching the mind-boggling figures of 1480 million by 2021 A.D. Closer still, the Planning Commission Expert Committee on Population has estimated that the country will be stepping into the 21st century with a population of 986 million.

With a population of 800 million at present, the country has out-paced China or, for that matter, any other country in terms of growth rate in the last 42 years. Today, 15 per cent of the world's population is in India which has just 2.4 per cent of the total surface area of the world.

Severely straining the country's scarce resources, this population explosion threatens to nullify many

of the courageous attempts being made by the Government to provide food, shelter, health care, education and employment to the country's teeming millions.

Reduction In Mortality Rate

A look at the country's demographic history reveals that population which stood at 238.4 million at the beginning of the 20th century remained somewhat stable till 1921. This can be largely explained by the near matching high mortality and fertility rates, the birth rate being 48 per thousand

and the death rate being 47 per thousand. It was between 1921 and 1951 (the first census year after Independence) that the population figures started accelerating its pace. Now our population is galloping at break-neck speed. In the four decades after independence the mortality rate sharply

dipped by another 60 per cent, resting at 11.1 per thousand in 1986. Better health services and medical care not only slashed mortality rates but also ensured longer life. Life expectancy at birth increased from 32 years in 1951 to over 58 years in 1989. This is the result of improved health services, elimination of mass killers like famine and epidemics and the eradication of dreaded endemic diseases like plague and small pox. Malaria was at one stage virtually eliminated. Though it has reared its head again the massive public health measures have kept

it under check and the number of deaths due to it are declining. Health service coverage has also considerably brought down infant mortality rates. But these highly positive achievements has left us with a burgeoning population problem which threatens to undermine and even negate the socio-economic developments. It cer-

tainly has overshadowed the achievements on the economic front.

Would then one say that efforts at containing population within limits are doomed to fail and that there is no escape from the inevitability of a population explosion? While the demographic situation in the country is grave, it would appear that, given the appropriate inputs, it would be possible to avert the ultimate disaster.

India is committed to achieve on one hand health for all and on the other realize the human resource replacement level of unity by the year 2000 AD. The demographic goals set for the end of the century are a birth rate of 21 per thousand (32.4 in 1986), a death rate of nine per cent (11 in 1986), infant mortality rate of less than 60 per cent and a life expectancy of 64 years at birth (currently 58 years).

Estimates predict that, if the present fertility rates are not curbed, India's population will be touching 1480 million by 2021. The question is one of survival. It has to be tackled on a war footing by each and every one of us.

Change In Attitude

These may appear to be very high especially in view of the fact that still many people live below the poverty line and are illiterate. The task is even harder when it is realized that the success or failure of the world's largest campaign to curb population depends entirely on voluntary acceptance by individuals. More so, in socio-economic cultural milieu which is as varied as the landscape and where early marriage and begetting at least one or two male children is an ingrained part of the national psyche.

Thanks to the sustained family planning campaign since the mid-sixties, the problem is no more of creating awareness and providing a motivation as such. It is now a question of evolving strategies that would help in attaining the desired goals in a shorter time-frame. This would mean not only providing larger services and facilities but also ensuring a much larger coverage of younger couples, particularly in the rural areas and among the urban poor who at present tend to accept birth-control practices only very late after having four or five children. A recent study has indicated that to be able to make a positive dent in the fertility rates, it is necessary to motivate younger couples.

One of the factors that influences fertility is the age of marriage. It is now established that with an increase in the age of marriage, say to 21 years, the number of births can be reduced substantially. Delayed marriage can, therefore, lead to a very perceptible fall in the birth-rate.

There have been some encouraging indications that the mean age of couples accepting family planning methods has come down. The average age of wives

of vasectomy acceptors, for instance came down from 32.7 years in 1973-74 to 31.9 years in 1986-87. Also, the percentage of acceptors below the age of 30 years went up from 33.4 to 39.7 during the same period. Tubectomy acceptors' mean age declined from 31.8 to 30.3 years and the percentage of tubectomy acceptors below the age of 30 years rose from 37.4 to 50. Apart from those accepting terminal methods, the mean age of IUP acceptors also declined from 29.8 years in 1974-75 to 28.1 years in 1986-87.

Efforts To Be Doubled

Another welcome trend has been that couples having lesser number of living children are coming forward to accept family planning methods. The percentage of acceptors with three or less number of living children has gone up from 61.2 to 63.9 in the case of vasectomy acceptors and from 53.6 to 59.4 in the case of tubectomy acceptors between 1978-79 and 1986-87.

All this has led to averting 95 million births since the inception of the family planning programme. In 1987-88 alone, 9.9 million births are estimated to have been averted due to increased rate of couple protection. The programme is expected to receive a further boost following various initiatives that have been taken in the last few years, the most impressive among them being the Universal Immunization Programme launched in 1985. The programme which covers 307 districts in the country till 1988-89 will reach out to the entire country by 1990 reducing infant and child mortality and encouraging parents to accept family planning methods.

However the enormity of the task ahead remains a daunting one. Out of 135.77 million couples, only 54 million or merely 39.8 percent have been effectively protected under various methods of family planning. Even by conservative projections, there would be 170 million eligible couples by the year 2000 and 60 per cent of them will have to be covered to achieve the replacement level of unity. This would mean that the present level of coverage of 54 million couples will have to be more than doubled in the next 11 years. Putting it differently, more than thrice the total number of acceptors enrolled over the last 38 years (since the launching of family planning programme in 1951) will have to be covered in less than one-third time.

If at all these targets are to be achieved, cumulative efforts by all concerned are a must. People's concern for population stabilization will have to be generated and built up to a very high level and facilities to transform that concern into real action—real acceptance of family planning by them as a way of life—will have to be provided.

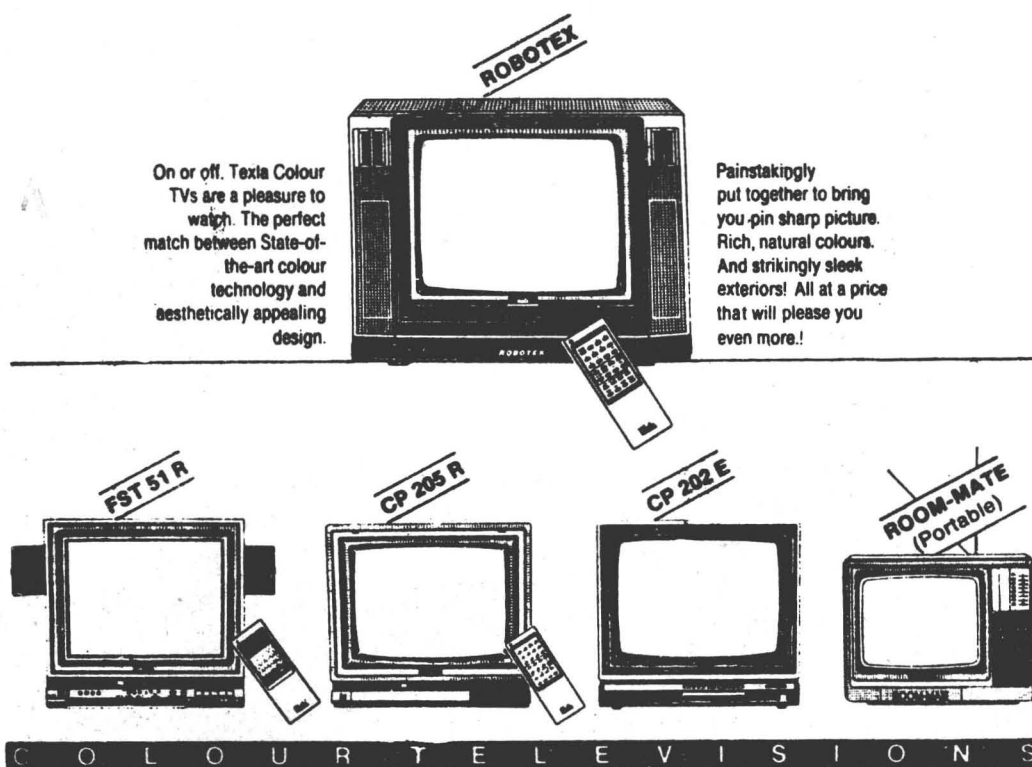
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